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ABSTRACT

This document contains two sections: a literature review of material related to part-time faculty, and the review's bibliography. The most recent research indicates that the use of part-time faculty positions in higher education as a proportion of total faculty positions has reached a plateau. The recently released study by the U.S. Department of Education estimates that part-timers made up 43% of the faculty workforce at colleges and universities. The pay and benefits of the part-time faculty in community colleges clearly do not equal those of full-time faculty in community colleges. The inequality in pay and benefits itself plays a role in the growth or decline of part-time employment's share of the total employment of faculty. Findings on any difference in instructional effectiveness between part-time and full-time faculty are inconclusive despite extensive work in this area. Many researchers emphasize the link between working conditions and effectiveness of the part-time faculty member. A critical working condition is the integration of the faculty member into the whole campus. The limited job mobility or opportunity facing part-time faculty has negative effects on these individuals. The likelihood or desire of part-time faculty to become full-time faculty underlies much of the discussion about limited opportunities and inequity. (Contains 83 references.) (JA)

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Part-Time Faculty

Literature Review and Bibliography

May 2001

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Preface

This document contains two sections: (1) a literature review of material related to part-time faculty; and (2) the review's bibliography.

The coverage of the material is somewhat broad. This breadth results from two factors. First, much relevant research and analysis involves community colleges outside of California, and some aspects of the community college system parallel the labor picture for the whole U.S. economy. Second, there is a very limited amount of published research that focuses solely on the part-time faculty situation in California's community colleges. As well as restricting the content, restricting the review only to California's community colleges would result in a very limited review.

Mary El-Bdour, the librarian for the Chancellor's Office, contributed substantially to this review. Thomas Todd, an analyst in the Governmental Relations Unit of the Chancellor's Office, also contributed to the review.

Willard Hom
Director of Research and Planning

Introduction

This document responds to the need for information about the issue of part-time faculty in the California Community Colleges. At its March 2001 meeting, the Board of Governors, California Community Colleges, expressed a need for a literature review on the issue. The Research and Planning Unit of the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, searched a variety of publications and has compiled the information presented below.

The search focused upon documents that resulted from objective research and analysis. Consequently, this review omits many position statements and historically relevant notes on this issue such as the laws and regulations concerning community college faculty. This is a literature review, and it only attempts to sum for the reader the many documents that touch on the part-time faculty issue. The review as such does not analyze the merits of any particular study.

The Part-Time Labor Trend

In the United States (and in Europe) part-time labor has gained favor among managers and administrators, and it is not a simple trend to understand (Mishel, Bernstein & Schmitt, 2001; Neumark, Polsky, & Hansen, 2000; Levenson, 2000; Blank, 1990). The apparent rise in part-time labor in the United States plays an economic and political role in the trend for part-time labor in higher education. (Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997; Rhoades, 1998; Grubb, 1999; Leslie, 1998).

The most recent research indicates that the use of part-time faculty positions in higher education as a proportion of total faculty positions has reached a plateau. The recently released study by the U.S. Department of Education estimates that part-timers made up 43% of the faculty workforce at colleges and universities. This statistic had been 42% in 1992 and 33% in 1987. (Wilson, 2001).

Pay and Benefits Equity

The current situation of part-time faculty and full-time faculty parallels the situation of "two-tier" labor markets or "dual labor markets" that labor economists have analyzed. (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2000). Labor economists have observed the use of less expensive part-time labor (or temporary labor) to replace full-time labor.

> "One study showed that employment of part-time workers in Great Britain expanded most rapidly during periods when they were covered by relatively few social insurance programs and protective regulations. Specifically, Britain's passage of the Employment Protection Act of 1975, which increased the eligibility of part-time employees for (among other things) job separation payments and maternity benefits, seemed to be associated with a slowdown in its part-time employment growth." (Ehrenberg & Smith, 1991).

Studies of U.S. industries have also shown declines in the use of part-time labor when the cost of such labor rose in relation to the cost of full-time labor. Mandated employer-provided health insurance (among other benefits that could be specified) would increase the cost of employing part-time labor. This would motivate employers to substitute part-time labor with full-time labor, thereby stemming the conversion of full-time work to part-time work. (Ehrenberg & Smith, 1991).

The evidence for disparities in part-time faculty pay is clear on the national level and in other states. (National Education Association, 1999; Palmer & Zimbler, 2000; Smallwood, 2001; Townsend; Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995; Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 1998). Evidence for disparities in California is also available (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2001; Nussbaum, 1999; California State Auditor, 2000; Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, 1987; Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges; 1999, Storer, 2000).

Instructional Effectiveness

For us to consider the concept of equal pay for equal work, we must be able to measure instructional effectiveness. More precisely, we must be able to gauge the degree to which part-timers and full-timers differ, if at all, in the output (education) for which they are hired.

Findings on any difference in instructional effectiveness are inconclusive despite extensive work in this area. (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Cohen & Brawer, 1972; Grubb, et al, 1999; Banachowski, 1996). Some studies have used grades (or success in a subsequent course) as a measure of the quality with which to compare the instructional effectiveness of part-time instructors to full-time instructors. (Burgess & Samuels, 1999; Iadevaia, 1991; Willett, 1980; Davis, Belcher &

McKittrick, 1986; Bolge, 1995) However, grades are not a universally accepted measure of teaching quality. (McArthur, 1999; Moore. & Trahan, 1998).

Other studies have used credentials (Kelly, 1991); examples of professional behavior (Keim, 1999; Benjamin, 1998; California Community and Junior College Association, 1978; Silvers, 1990); levels of attitudes (Rifkin, 1998, Freeland, 1998; Gappa, 2000; Hagedorn, 2000); and ratings by students, administrators, or professional peers (Obiekwe 1999; Hellman, 1998; Cruise, Furst, & Klimes, 1980; Willett, 1980). A few of the above studies have used more than one of the above methods to measure instructional quality in their analyses.

The inability of researchers to measure conclusively any difference in the effectiveness of part-time instructors and full-time instructors is consistent with the experience of research in labor markets other than higher education.

> "The difficulties of conducting research on contingent workers, coupled with conceptual problems in defining the full range of behaviors and psychological responses directly and indirectly related to performance, make the lack of research on the performance of contingent workers understandable. Comparisons among employees is especially difficult if the jobs of contingent workers differ from those of full-time employees in terms of work tasks, work status, direct rewards and fringe benefits, and other critical job features...The likelihood that psychological contracts and performance dimensions differ in meaningful ways between these two groups of workers raises important questions about the extent to which performance of the two groups of workers can be compared meaningfully...Researchers have had difficulty operationalizing employee performance when it has been defined broadly ..." (Hulin & Glomb, 1999).

Access and Working Conditions

The concept of student access to instructors plays a role in the decisions about hiring more full-time faculty. Research has shown that out-of-class communication can be measured and that it affects different types of students in different ways. (Fusani, 1994) However, little research has focused on the area of student access to the community college instructor.

Many researchers emphasize the link between working conditions and effectiveness of the part-time faculty member. A critical working condition is the integration of the faculty member to the whole campus. Linking part-time instructors to the campus includes use of employee handbooks, orientations, technology, written agreements and rules; flexible meeting schedules; inclusion on committees; and interaction with full-time staff, among others things. (Jacobs, 1998; Wyles, 1998; State Council of Education for Virginia, 1998; Bach, 1999; Leslie, 1998; Kelly 1991; Banachowski, 1996; Digranes & Digranes, 1995; Roueche, Roueche & Milliron, 1996; Silvers, 1990; Erwin, 1993; Sheeks & Hutcheson, 1998)

Workload Measurement

The concept of workload plays a role in the discussions about the part-time faculty issue. If analysts view the compensation issue from the perspective of effort or input, then workload becomes critical in addressing the part-time faculty issue. We need to measure workload if we must evaluate the equivalence of one or more jobs. However, the use of workload in analyzing issues in the part-time faculty situation has varying definitions and hurdles (primarily the availability of data). (Meyer, 1998; Byrd, 1994; Jedamus, 1974; Steckheim, 1974; Sax, Astin, Korn & Gilmartin, 1999; Institute for Research in Social Behavior, 1978) Several researchers have tracked trends in faculty time usage (for both full-time and part-time), and they found that "across all institutions, there was a statistically significant decrease in the amount of time faculty spent advising and counseling students." (Milem, Berger & Dey, 2000)

Diversity

The issue of diversity in the community college labor force has received less attention from researchers than other issues have received. To be sure, diversity among the part-time faculty is changing.(Schneider, 1998). A valuable asset for commencing this kind of research is the Staffing and Salaries Report, 1999 by the Chancellor's Office. Only a few studies touch upon diversity or the gender gap (Rhoades, 1998; California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2001), and this shortfall signals an area for further efforts.

Job Mobility

The limited job mobility or opportunity facing part-time faculty has negative effects on these individuals.(Hagedorn, 2000; Kuchera & Miller, 1988; Gappa, 2000). The likelihood or desire of part-time faculty to become full-time faculty underlies much of the discussion about limited opportunities and inequity. About 60% of one national sample of part-time instructors (in 2-year colleges) reported that they expected little chance of getting a full-time postsecondary position in the next three years.(Palmer & Zimbler, 2000). A study of California's community colleges found that about half of the part-time faculty would accept a full-time faculty job at a community college. (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2001) The desire of currently employed part-time faculty to have priority in teaching hours (when full-time faculty cannot meet the college's teaching needs) was voiced strongly decades ago.(Ferris, 1976) Job security also affects the attitudes and behaviors of part-time faculty, and it consequently needs some attention.

The issue of job mobility will present a major hurdle. The college's use of non-tenured faculty can be strongly motivated by the low flexibility that tenure status gives administrators. The use of part-time faculty arguably stems from this point.

"An anti-layoff policy...tends to protect the jobs of insiders (those who already have jobs) at the expense of outsiders (new entrants to the labor market) who are seeking work...The result of tough anti-layoff rules may thus be increased use of contingent workers—part-timers, temporaries—who do not receive job security guarantees..." (Mitchell, 1989).

Summary

This literature review may help the decision-maker on the following points. Like other sectors of the economy, employers in higher education have had economic incentives to use part-time staff in lieu of full-time staff. The pay and benefits of the part-time faculty in community colleges clearly do not equal those of full-time faculty in community colleges. The inequality in pay and benefits itself plays a role in the growth or decline of part-time employment's share of the total employment of faculty. Researchers have failed to find a conclusive and consistent difference in the instructional effectiveness of part-time faculty when compared to full-time faculty. The task may simply be too complex to achieve soon.

Little research has been published recently on access to part-time instructors at community colleges and on diversity of part-time faculty. However, analysts of the issue have offered numerous proposals for improving the working conditions of part-time faculty. Analysts have also proposed methods of workload measurement but a "best" approach is undefined. Part-time faculty harbor major concerns about job mobility (as well as job security) but a simple solution seems distant.

Next Steps

The above literature review highlights some areas deserving more work. Clearly, some research is needed to understand the multicultural aspects of the part-time faculty situation. Also, studies that test assumptions for their applicability to California's Community College system would be helpful. Finally, we may want to examine how future events may unfold by projecting the expected demand for instructors by discipline and geography. This last item will enable us to plan for making change rather than reacting to it in a belated way. Other areas for further study have been previously reported (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2001).

Part-Time Faculty

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